since Army had huge deficiency of vehicles in 2.5 Ton and 5/7.5 Ton category vehicles, it has been decided to place direct orders on M/s Telco and M/s Ashok Leyland also, for these vehicles, to reduce the deficiency.

National Security Council

805. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a special Committee was set up to study and recommend establishment of a National Security Council;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Committee submitted its report, but its recommendations were not accepted; and

(c) what are Government's views on this?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) On April 14, 1998, Government constituted a Task Force with Shri K.C. Pant as its Chairman and Shri Jaswant Singh, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission as member and Air Cmde. Jasjit Singh, Director (IDSA) as Convenor to work out the constitution, role and functions of the proposed National Security Council. The Task Force submitted its report to the Government on June 25, 1998.

(b) and (c) The recommendations of the Task Force were taken into consideration while setting up the NSC.

Interception of India's defence signals

806. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attempts by a foreign power to intercept and eavesdrop on the secret radio signals of Indian defence and intelligence agencies have been reported;

(b) if so, whether identity of the interceptor has been established; and

(c) the precautions being taken to maintain secrecy of the sensitive communications?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government is aware that attempts are made by outside powers to intercept Defence and other official communications.

(c) All precautions are taken to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive communications. It would not be in the interest of national security to disclose those details.

Purchase of Advanced Jet Trainer

807. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that high rate of crashes in the Indian Air Force is attributed to the lack of Advanced Jet Trainer;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for not approving the proposals for the purchase of AJT which has been pending for the last fifteen years; and

(c) by when this proposal is likely to be approved and by when AJT is likely to be added?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. The lack of an AJT has been identified as one of the causes for the high rate of crashes in the IAF.

(b) Discussions have been held with various manufacturers. All the available options are being evaluated.

(c) The final decision on the selection of the aircraft will be taken after complete examination of all the options.